

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original) A telescopic shaft used for steering of a vehicle in which a male shaft and a female shaft are fitted to each other non-rotatably and slidably, wherein at least one set of torque transmission members are disposed in at least one set of intermediate fitting portions formed on the outer circumferential surface of said male shaft and the inner circumferential surface of said female shaft, and a stopper plate for regulating movement of said at least one set of torque transmission members with respect to the axial direction is provided at an end portion of said male shaft or in the vicinity thereof.

2. (original) A telescopic shaft used for steering of a vehicle according to claim 1, wherein said at least one set of intermediate fitting portions comprise at least one set of axial grooves formed on the outer circumferential surface of said male shaft and the inner circumferential surface of said female shaft respectively, and the axial grooves of said male shaft have a surface that is substantially perpendicular to the axial direction and in contact with said at least one set of torque transmission members.

3. (currently amended) A telescopic shaft used for steering of a vehicle according to claim 1-~~or~~-2, wherein said stopper plate comprises an elastic member for applying axial preload and a pair of flat plates that hold the elastic member therebetween.

4. (currently amended) A telescopic shaft used for steering of a vehicle according to claim 1-~~or~~-2, wherein said stopper plate is fixed to a small diameter portion formed at an end portion of said male shaft.

5. (currently amended) A telescopic shaft used for steering of a vehicle according to claim 1-~~or~~-2, wherein said stopper plate comprises a flat plate and fixing means for fixing the flat plate at a desired position with respect to the axial direction on said male shaft.

6. (new) A telescopic shaft used for steering of a vehicle according to claim 2, wherein said stopper plate comprises an elastic member for applying axial preload and a pair of flat plates that hold the elastic member therebetween.

7. (new) A telescopic shaft used for steering of a vehicle according to claim 2, wherein said stopper plate

is fixed to a small diameter portion formed at an end portion of said male shaft.

8. (new) A telescopic shaft used for steering of a vehicle according to claim 2, wherein said stopper plate comprises a flat plate and fixing means for fixing the flat plate at a desired position with respect to the axial direction on said male shaft.